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Patent Claims

1. A method for operation of an automobile night vision system having two or more components, comprising  
5 an illumination unit for the illumination of the area surrounding the vehicle,  
an image recording unit for the recording of data from the surrounding area,  
an image processing unit for the evaluation of data  
10 from the surrounding area,  
characterized  
in that the components of the night vision system are operated in different constellations on the basis of at least one control signal.
- 15 2. The method as claimed in claim 1,  
characterized  
in that an optical display is used as an additional component in order to display information from the  
20 surrounding area as well as further information from image data produced by the image processing unit.
3. The method as claimed in one of the preceding claims,  
25 characterized  
in that the night vision system interchanges information with vehicle-internal systems, and a suitable interface is used as an additional component for this purpose.
- 30 4. The method as claimed in one of claims 2 or 3,  
characterized  
in that, in the situation where the control signal is represented by the image data supplied from the image  
35 processing unit,  
and the optical display is switched off automatically, if the control signal has not changed within a

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predetermined time interval, in order to avoid irritation.

5. The method as claimed in one of claims 2 to 4,  
5 characterized  
in that, in the situation where the control signal is  
generated on the basis of a request for the night  
vision functionality by the driver, the optical display  
is activated in any case, in order to avoid irritation.

10

6. The method as claimed in one of claims 2 to 5,  
characterized  
in that, in the situation where the control signal is  
generated on the basis of communication with other  
15 vehicles and/or traffic facilities, and communication  
is intended to take place using components of the night  
vision system, the optical display is not switched on,  
in order to avoid distracting the driver.

20 7. The method as claimed in one of the preceding  
claims,  
characterized  
in that, in the situation where the control signal is  
generated by vehicle-internal systems,  
25 the night vision system is switched on, with the  
optical display remaining off, in order to avoid  
distracting the driver.

8. The method as claimed in one of the preceding  
30 claims  
characterized  
in that, in the situation where the control signal is  
generated on the basis of a request for the night  
vision functionality by the driver or by further  
35 vehicle-internal systems, as a result of which the  
night vision system is activated in any case, the  
illumination unit is switched on only as a function of

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further operating conditions, in order not to endanger others in the traffic.

9. The method as claimed in one of claims 1 to 7,  
5 characterized  
in that, in the situation where the control signal is generated on the basis of a vehicle-internal system which is connected to a vehicle-external diagnosis system,  
10 all of the components of the night vision system and the optical display can be activated independently of the operating conditions,  
and information can be interchanged between these components and vehicle-internal systems.
- 15 10. An apparatus for operation of an automobile night vision system having two or more components, comprising an illumination unit for illumination of the area surrounding the vehicle,  
20 an image recording unit for recording of data from the surrounding area,  
an image processing unit for evaluation of data from the surrounding area,  
characterized  
25 in that the components of the night vision system are operated in different constellations on the basis of at least one control signal.
11. The apparatus as claimed in claim 10,  
30 characterized  
in that the night vision system has an optical display as an additional component.
12. The apparatus as claimed in one of the preceding  
35 claims,  
characterized  
in that the night vision system has an interface to

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vehicle-internal systems as an additional component.

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